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SUBJECT: JANUARY 11 MFA PRESS BRIEFING

11. Key points made at the January 11 MFA press conference:

-- The United States and China exchanged positions during the ongoing Natsios talks regarding Sudan.

-- China has no position on the planned troop increase in Iraq.

-- PM Wen met with Israeli PM Olmert and called for resuming dialogue between Israel and Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

-- China's firm counterterrorism actions protect both China and the world.

-- MFA said a yet-be-released Human Rights Watch report criticizing China was prejudiced and politically motivated. The Chinese government is working to realize a stable and developed society.

-- China firmly opposes UNSC interference in Myanmar.

-- China calls for the lifting of the EU arms sales ban and says PM Abe's comments to PM Blair that China is a threat are groundless.

Natsios Meetings on Sudan

12. MFA Spokesman Liu Jianchao said in the regular January 11 press briefing that Special Presidential Envoy Natsios exchanged ideas with Chinese officials January 11 on the issue of Sudan, but avoiding answering a question as to whether or not China would put more pressure on Sudan. Liu said the United States voiced its concerns and China elaborated its position during the talks, which are ongoing.

No Position on Planned Troop Increase

13. Liu was twice asked to clarify China's position on President Bush's planned troop increase in Iraq, but said only that China hopes for peace and stability, Iraqi self rule and the realization of human rights, democracy and economic development for the country.

PM Wen Meets with Israeli PM Olmert

14. In responding to questions regarding Israeli PM Olmert's visit to Beijing and the PM's comment that he was pleasantly surprised with China's attitude toward Iran, Liu said that PM Olmert met with PM Wen Jiabao who called for Israel to resume dialogue with Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. PM Olmert confirmed Israel's willingness to resume talks and consult with China on

regional issues. Liu said that China's position on Iran is clear. UNSC Resolution 1737 reflects the international community's concern with Iran. China opposes nuclear proliferation and hopes to resume talks to peacefully solve this issue. Liu confirmed that the two leaders did not discuss Israeli arms sales to China.

Overseas Uighurs and UN Inspectors in Western China

15. Asked for the MFA's comment on calls from overseas Uighur organizations to allow UN inspectors into China to confirm details of last week's raid of a suspected terrorist training camp near China's western border, Liu responded only that China's firm counterterrorism actions are in the interest of China and the world. He added that in this respect there can be no double standards as no country wants to see a "second Al-Qaeda" in China.

Critical Human Rights Watch Report

16. Liu said that the "so-called 'Human Rights Watch'" reports serve political ends and take a prejudiced attitude toward China, in response to a reporter's question about a HRW report, said to be coming out January 11, which claims China's human rights situation deteriorated in 2006. Liu maintained that the Chinese government is trying to promote both social stability and a developed society. China is willing to discuss human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect, said Liu.

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China Firmly Opposed to UNSC "Interference" in Myanmar

17. China firmly opposes interference by the UN Security Council in Myanmar, but endorses the international community's providing constructive support such as mediation efforts led by ASEAN and the special envoy of the UN Secretary-General, said Liu. He added that Myanmar's neighboring countries, ASEAN and the Non-Aligned Movement share an identical view. Liu stated that issues there are to be treated as "internal affairs" of Myanmar and that relevant parties should take cautious and responsible attitudes and avoid further complicating the situation in Myanmar.

Comments on British-Japanese Summit

18. When asked to comment on reports from British PM Blair's meeting with Japanese PM Abe, Liu restated China's position that the European Union should lift its ban on arms sales to China and eliminate the political prejudice on which the ban is based. He called groundless Abe's defense of the ban because of the threat posed by China and hoped that Japan would join with China to improve bilateral relations.

Zeng Qinghong Presidential Rumors

19. When asked to comment on recent reports that Zeng Qinghong might be made the next president of China, Liu said that this is not within the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to comment on. He added, however, that the democratic system in China continues to improve.

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